

Now is an Important Time to Consider Quitting Smoking

We have special concern for smokers these days. As our lives are disrupted by the coronavirus, there are concerns about the damaging impact the coronavirus (COVID-19) may have on those who smoke. Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, says, *"Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape."* Evidence shows that smoking harms the ability of the lungs to fight infection.

Despite the stressful times we're living in, people who smoke may want to quit to improve their ability to fight the coronavirus. For others, the stress may have led them to relapse and start smoking again. But it's never too late to try to quit. As the U.S. Surgeon General reported in January, quitting smoking at any age provides health benefits.

If you smoke, now may be a good time to call the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW ([1-800-784-8669](tel:1-800-784-8669)) for free coaching and support 24 hours each day, seven days a week. Enroll online, access quit planning tools, peer support and motivational text messages at [KeepTryingMA.org](https://www.KeepTryingMA.org). It can all be done from home.

Up to eight weeks of FREE nicotine replacement help from patches, gum or lozenges are available through the Helpline (with medical eligibility). With coaching and quit medication people can be twice as likely to quit for good compared to those who try to quit on their own.

Quitting improves one's health right away; lungs start to heal, and the body starts to repair its ability to fight infection.

For more information, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [KeepTryingMA.org](https://www.KeepTryingMA.org). Or contact me, Tina Grosowsky, Program Coordinator, Central MA Tobacco-Free Community Partnership, tina.grosowsky@umassmed.edu or 508-856-5067.



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